

CHAPTER 7: NONVERBAL NEGOTIATING

Learning Objectives

At the end of this chapter you will be able to:

Primary Learning Objective (PLO)

Recognize and interpret nonverbal cues used by participants (including self).
Use nonverbal messages.

Classroom Learning Objective 7/1

Explain importance of nonverbals in negotiations.

Classroom Learning Objective 7/2

Describe the role of body language in negotiating.

Classroom Learning Objective 7/3

Describe the role of physical environment in negotiating.

Classroom Learning Objective 7/4

Describe the role of personal appearance in negotiating.

Classroom Learning Objective 7/5

Describe the role of human voice and the handshake in negotiating.

Contents and Procedures

Chapter Contents

In this chapter you will learn:

Section	Title	See Page
7.0	Chapter Overview	98
	Communication is More than Verbal	98
7.1	Recognize Nonverbal Communication and its Importance in Negotiation	99
	Importance of Nonverbals	99
	Illustration 1 Nonverbal Negotiating	100
	Definitions	100
	Different Nonverbal Messages	100
	Cultural Influences	102
	Importance of Nonverbals in Negotiations	102
7.2	Recognize How Body Language Sends Nonverbal Messages	103
	Body Language	103
	Positive Attitudes	103
	Negative Attitudes	104
7.3	Recognize How the Physical Environment Sends Nonverbal Messages	106
	Physical Environment	106
	Seating Arrangements	106
	Bargaining Table Configuration	106
	Position of Negotiator	106
	Illustration 2 Bargaining Table Configuration	107
	Facility Signals	108
7.4	Recognize the Importance of Personal Appearance in Negotiations	109
	Personal Appearance	109
7.5	Recognize Nonverbal Messages Indicated by the Human Voice and Handshake	110
	Voice Sounds	110
	The Handshake	111
7.6	Summary	112

7.0 Chapter Overview

Communication is More Than Verbal

Since negotiation is defined as "**a communication process whereby both parties attempt to reach agreement on a matter of common concern,**" good negotiators must also be good communicators. Yet, many negotiators think of communication only as verbal exchanges in speech or writing. But verbal formulations account for only a small portion of the messages people send and receive. Scientific research has shown that between 70 and 90 percent of the entire spectrum of all communication is of the nonverbal variety.¹ Consequently, government negotiators should be aware of the different forms of nonverbal messages they are likely to encounter during bargaining sessions.

Although most people are not fully aware of other ways to communicate besides the traditional verbal methods of using the written or spoken word, without realizing it these same people continually send and receive nonverbal messages. This phenomenon is continually demonstrated in my class when students do not respond to the question, "Who is your favorite nonverbal communicator?" However, when the question is restated to say "Who is your favorite actor or model?" most students readily voice their preference. Many individuals simply do not realize that the primary determinant to success in acting or modeling is the ability to communicate nonverbally. After all, anyone can read script or pose--it is the rare ability to send just the right nonverbal messages that separates the very best from the very worst performers.

¹For the purposes of this book, verbal communication means communication with words whether spoken or written.

7.1 Recognize Nonverbal Communication and its Importance in Negotiation

Importance of Nonverbals

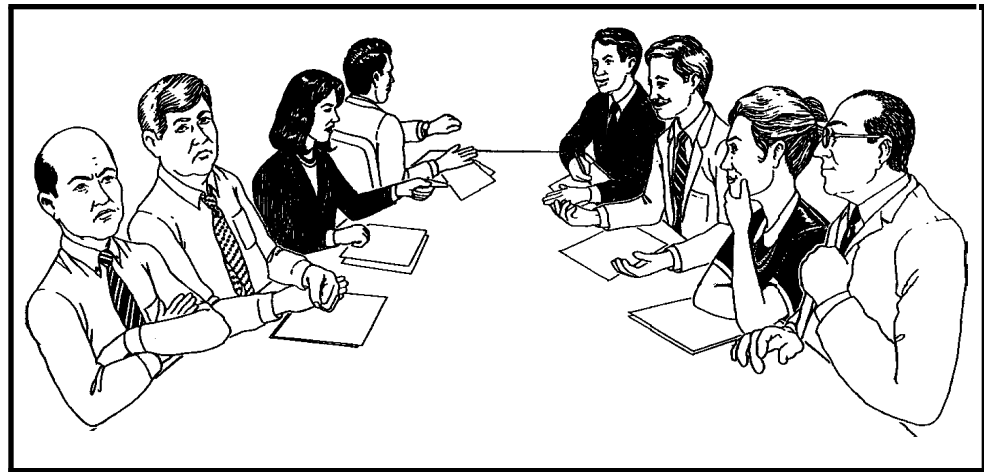
The importance of nonverbals is becoming more and more evident in our society. Consumer behavior experts are used by businesses to detect good sales prospects through nonverbal buying habits. In the courtroom, attorneys for both sides rely on nonverbal experts to determine jury selections. Juries themselves often rely on nonverbal cues given by defendants and witnesses to determine legal verdicts. In every walk of life, people continually rely on nonverbal messages to form their opinions of situations and of other individuals, because the great majority of our daily intercourse is of the nonverbal variety.

A good understanding of nonverbal messages will always be to our benefit during negotiations. Bargainers skilled at interpreting nonverbals will be able to glean useful information from the other side. An awareness of nonverbal communication modes may also prevent government negotiators from harming their own bargaining position by inadvertently sending nonverbal signals that disclose confidential information or weaknesses in their bargaining position.

Bargainers who look only for the overt meanings of verbal signals by focusing on what they see in writing or what they hear in human speech, miss many important messages. In contrast, negotiators with an awareness of both nonverbal and verbal messages have an important edge.

Illustration 1 shows two negotiation teams. The nonverbal messages indicated by their body postures, facial gestures, and appearance convincingly demonstrate the attitudes of each side. The team on the right transmits nonverbals exuding confidence and success. In contrast, the nonverbals of the team on the left convey negative attitudes and other unflattering characteristics. The nonverbals of which side exhibit the greatest likelihood for bargaining success and a win/win negotiation style? Which side would you prefer to emulate?

Illustration 1 Nonverbal Negotiating



Which side is winning?

Definitions

Nonverbals consist of all forms of communication that are not derived from the language we speak or write. When communicating in a nonverbal manner, we reveal ourselves not in what we say, but in everything we do. Scientific research in the area has identified over a dozen different nonverbal specialties, including:

- Kinesis (body language) is the study of nonverbal messages indicated by body movements, gestures, and posture.
- Oculistics (eye behavior) examines communication sent by the movement of the human eye, such as looking away.
- Haptics (touching behavior) studies the messages conveyed by the way people touch each other, such as in handshaking.
- Vocalics (study of sound) explores the communication sent by inflections of the voice and nonverbal sounds, such as laughter.
- Proxemics (study of space and distance) studies the messages sent by the physical surrounding and the distance or proximity of people to each other.

Different Nonverbal Messages

Nonverbals can be communicated as conscious or subliminal messages in either a deliberate or an involuntary manner.

Conscious and deliberate nonverbals

Senders of conscious nonverbals are deliberately trying to communicate. For example, the individual extending a hug wants to convey friendship. Similarly, a person could deliberately pat someone on the back to communicate support.

Most receivers of conscious nonverbal communication are aware of the meaning intended by the sender. The receiver of a hug, for instance, generally realizes that the message is a sign of friendship.

Subliminal nonverbals

Subliminal messages are communicated to the subconscious mind of the receiver. Receivers of subliminal messages are not consciously aware of the message. Gut reactions are frequently based upon the subconscious reading of subliminal nonverbals, so we should not ignore them when forming opinions.

Modern society provides us with many examples of subliminal nonverbals. The symbols of authority conveyed by the wearing of police and military uniforms are subliminally communicated. Personal appearance transmits both conscious and subconscious messages; well-dressed executives project success and credibility, while poorly dressed images transmit subliminal messages denoting failure and lack of credibility.

Although subliminals do not create awareness on the conscious level, the receiver is still influenced by the communication. In fact, subconscious communication often has a more powerful impact than conscious messages.

The advertising world is replete with examples of the value of subliminal nonverbal messages. Young, beautiful people are often seen in advertisements to communicate the subconscious message that the advertised product is associated with youth and beauty (and is therefore better). Companies also pay large sums of money to have their products appear in movies. While these appearances are not typical product advertisements, the mere association of the product with the movie transmits subliminal messages that will influence viewers to prefer the product.

Involuntary nonverbals

Most nonverbal messages are sent involuntarily. Although the preceding examples illustrated deliberate nonverbal communication by the advertising world, nonverbal negotiators are often not aware when they communicate with nonverbals.

The involuntary nature of nonverbal communication is particularly evident in the area of body language. People unintentionally convey nonverbal signals by their facial expressions, gestures, and body postures. For example, people telling falsehoods often involuntarily send nonverbal messages indicated by frequent eye blinking. Because involuntary nonverbals represent unplanned physical responses, this communication form tends to be particularly revealing and more honest than verbal communication or even conscious nonverbal messages.

Sometimes nonverbals cannot be accurately interpreted because the messages have multiple meanings. For instance, the meaning of a yawn may be either lack of interest or actual physical fatigue. Similarly, rapid eye blinking might indicate deceit or just poor-fitting contact lenses. Nevertheless, nonverbals can be relied on to a great extent because even the spoken and written word is often ambiguous. However, interpreting nonverbal messages is often more difficult

because so many nonverbals are transmitted to the subconscious mind. Look for patterns of behavior that correlate with each other to obtain more accurate interpretations of nonverbal messages.

Cultural Influences

The meanings of the same nonverbal can be different in other societies. Just as the same sounding word has different interpretation when spoken in other languages, identical nonverbals are sometimes interpreted in different ways by other cultures. For example, while maintaining eye contact when communicating in person is acceptable in our society, eye contact in other societies can be seen as offensive.

Importance of Nonverbals in Negotiations

An awareness of nonverbal communication is particularly important in negotiations because the greater honesty of the nonverbals can be used to verify the verbal message. Comparisons between the stated word and the nonverbal signal can disclose inconsistencies between the two different kinds of communication. Negotiators can make a better impression by sending nonverbal and verbal messages that do not conflict.

The types of nonverbal communication typically found in the bargaining setting most helpful to negotiators consist of body language, the physical environment, personal appearance, voice sounds, and the handshake.

7.2 Recognize How Body Language Sends Nonverbal Messages

Body Language The nonverbal area of body language examines the meaning of facial expressions along with the different postures and gestures of the various parts of the human body. Research on the subject has catalogued 135 distinct gestures and expressions of the face, head, and body. Eighty of these expressions were face and head gestures, including nine different ways of smiling.

Understanding body expressions is tremendously important for the negotiator because physical manifestations transmit important messages that either validate or conflict with verbal communication. Most physical expressions consist of involuntary reactions which communicate messages that the originator inadvertently sends. As mentioned earlier, excessive blinking often serves as a lie detector to indicate dishonesty.

Even the interpretation of conscious expressions are helpful when the physical display discloses more than what the sender intended. For example, showing displeasure over a negotiating position may also reveal a personal dislike for the other side. Similarly, a deliberate show of anticipation may inadvertently disclose an overeagerness to settle.

Body language indicates varying attitudes of the originator. Quite frequently, multiple expressions conveying the same meaning are exhibited at the same time. These simultaneous physical signals reinforce each other and may reduce ambiguity surrounding the message. For example, eagerness is often exhibited with the simultaneous physical displays of excessive smiling along with frequent nodding of the head.

The common attitudes communicated nonverbally during negotiations can be grouped into the two broad classifications of positive attitudes and negative attitudes.

Positive Attitudes

Positive attitudes interpreted from common body expressions may be useful in facilitating win/win strategies. They include the attitudes listed below.

Confidence is often exhibited by the following nonverbal signals:

- Hands in pocket with thumbs out
- Hands on lapel of coat
- Steepled fingers or hands
- Good body posture, such as square shoulders and a straight back
- Hands on hips

Interest may be exhibited by the following nonverbals which are often done simultaneously:

- Tilted head toward speaker
- Sitting on edge of chair
- Upper body leaning in sprinter's position
- Eyes focused on speaker

Evaluation gestures are frequently indicated by the following signs, some of which are accomplished together:

- Peering out over eyeglasses
- Pipe smoker gesture with chin cupped between thumb and fingers (classic example is Rodan sculpture "The Thinker.")
- Putting hands to bridge of nose
- Stroking chin

Eagerness is often demonstrated by the following gestures:

- Rubbing hands together
- Smiling excessively
- Frequent nodding of the head

Negative Attitudes

Common negative attitudes conveyed by body expressions include the nonverbals listed below.

Deception or dishonesty is often demonstrated by the following signs:

- Frequent eye blinking
- Hand covering mouth while speaking
- Looking away while speaking
- Quick sideways glances

Defensiveness may be indicated by the following nonverbals:

- Arms crossed high on chest
- Crossed legs
- Pointing index finger

Insecurity is often exhibited in the following manner:

- Hands completely in pocket
- Constant fidgeting
- Chewing pencil or biting fingernails
- Hand wringing

Frustration is frequently shown by the following nonverbal mannerisms:

- Tightness of jaw
- Rubbing back of neck
- Drawing brows together

Boredom or indifference is generally displayed in the following manner:

- Eyes not focused at speaker or looking elsewhere
 - Head in hand
 - Sloppy or informal body posture
 - Preoccupation with something else
-

7.3 Recognize How the Physical Environment Sends Nonverbal Messages

Physical Environment

The physical environment transmits nonverbal communication that is extremely important to negotiators. An understanding of the nonverbal messages transmitted from seating arrangements and facilities can give bargainers a big edge in negotiations.

Seating Arrangements

Seating arrangements convey powerful nonverbal messages. They include the size and shape of the bargaining tables and the seating location of the chief negotiator.

Bargaining Table Configuration

Although there is no "standard" table configuration for every negotiation session, the way the bargaining tables are arranged transmits important conscious and subliminal messages. It is worth remembering that the Paris peace negotiation to end the Vietnam War were delayed for almost a year over negotiations on the shape of the bargaining table.

The bargaining table configurations in Illustration 2 convey different messages. Arrangement A is a typical configuration with two parties on opposite sides of the table facing each other. Arrangement B may tend to give one side an advantage over the other because the arrangement suggests only one important figure at the end of the vertical extension. The distance between the tables in Arrangement C shows a need for "space" between the two sides, which could mean more formality or less trust. Finally, Arrangement D may be the most conducive to win/win negotiations because the round shape is usually associated with equality.

The best table arrangement for any negotiation depends on the situation. However, win/win negotiation attitudes can be promoted with table configurations that convey trust. In contrast, win/lose attitudes are created by table settings that communicate disparity or mistrust between the two sides.

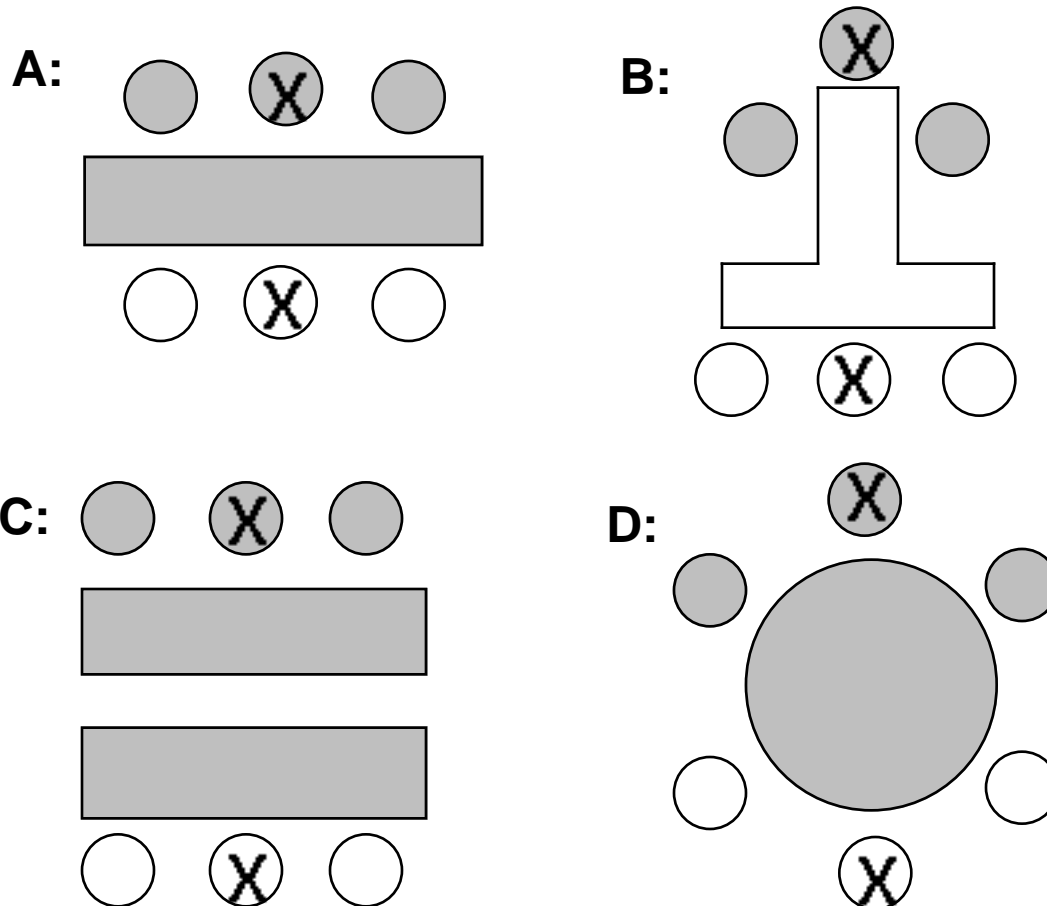
Position of Chief Negotiator

The physical position of the lead negotiator is generally at the center of the negotiation team. The central position conveys a message of authority and sends an image of a unified bargaining team. For example, the American President (as the most powerful person in the U.S. government) will be always be seen seated at the center of every conference table.

Besides sending negative nonverbals, positioning the chief negotiator somewhere other than the center seat also has adverse practical consequences. Some members may not be able to whisper advice, give cues, or pass notes when the principal negotiator is at an end position. The ideal place for the chief negotiator in each arrangement shown in the illustration is the middle seat flanked by team members on either side.

Illustration 2

Bargaining Table Configuration



Facility Signals The facility itself communicates powerful nonverbals. Hosting negotiations in impressive offices at prestige locations conveys positive attributes about the host, such as success and credibility. Conducting negotiation in good facilities can also increase the self-assurance of the host and lower the confidence of the guest negotiators.

Conversely, negotiations held at substandard locations convey nonverbals with unflattering interpretations. Moreover, poor facilities may lower the confidence of the host team while increasing the self-assurance of the guest negotiators. And since many of the facility nonverbals are communicated to the subconscious, bargainers may not even realize the effect on their confidence levels.

Besides conveying positive or negative attitudes about negotiator confidence, facility nonverbals convey messages about other traits of the host organization, such as quality. For these reasons many restaurants maintain clean restrooms to enhance the perceived quality of their food products.

The nonverbals generated by facility signals are often powerful enough to have a significant influence on negotiations. A Microsoft Corporation executive regained confidence during important negotiations with IBM when he noticed old, outdated computer equipment used in the "Big Blue" offices. The

unflattering nonverbal message transmitted by the dated equipment encouraged the executive to stand firm and not to back down in negotiations with the computer giant.

The government side is sometimes at a disadvantage compared to the contractor team in regard to facility nonverbals. This occurs because many contractors often have impressive offices at prestigious locations, while government offices located in older buildings are frequently not as attractive. Nevertheless, the government side can overcome this disadvantage by making the negotiation setting as presentable as possible or selecting better alternative sites. The government team members should also not let unflattering facility nonverbals diminish their own self-confidence or feel a need to apologize for a poor office environment.

7.4 Recognize the Importance of Personal Appearance in Negotiations

Personal Appearance

The value of personal appearance in projecting nonverbals during negotiations cannot be overstated. Since our society attaches so much importance to the way someone looks, numerous conscious and subliminal nonverbals are communicated by dress and appearance. Without question, personal image will influence the negotiation by conveying positive or negative attributes about both the negotiators and their bargaining positions.

Many otherwise good negotiators overlook the importance of personal appearance during negotiations, and consequently lose credibility. The other side may even feel slighted by inappropriate appearance. For example, entering into a negotiation wearing sports clothes may convey a lack of professionalism or even incompetence. Even if the nonverbal message is incorrect, the perception of the other side will be more important than the actual facts.

Make sure your personal appearance is conducive to negotiation success. Appear for negotiations as you would dress for a promotion or job interview. Do not let improper grooming, such as uncombed hair or an unshaven look, detract from your appearance and communicate unfavorable nonverbals about you or your bargaining position. Remember, that if you look good, you will generally feel and perform better.

7.5 Recognize Nonverbal Messages Indicated by the Human Voice and Handshake

Voice Sounds

The nonverbals communicated by the sound of the human voice, known as vocalics, can transmit valuable information during negotiations. This area includes the inflection of the voice, pronunciation of words, the volume of the voice, and the speed of delivery.

The precise way the voice sounds projects positive or negative signals which can influence the negotiations. For example, a harsh or loud delivery could alienate people and indicate a win/lose negotiation style. Similarly, tentativeness in speech could be an indication of uncertainty, while mumbling could even indicate deceit. Likewise, mispronouncing words could imply ignorance or incompetence. And like all nonverbals, the sound of the voice transmits both conscious and subliminal messages.

Government negotiators can use this form of nonverbal communication to their advantage by speaking at a moderate pace in a confident and articulate manner. In this regard, you might need to practice the delivery beforehand and rehearse difficult words or technical statements. Since negotiators are trying to "sell" their position, it is important to speak in a calm, persuasive manner and not to raise your voice or talk harshly. In addition, the government side can obtain useful information from the other side by listening not only to what is said, but how the words are spoken.

The Handshake

Most negotiations begin and end with a handshake. The physical clasping of hands indicates nonverbal communication conveyed by touching behavior (haptics). Nonverbal messages are transmitted by the way the handshake feels to each side. And since this communication is frequently conveyed as a subliminal message and has a significant influence on perception, government negotiators should be aware of the importance of the handshake.

Although the handshake concludes most negotiated agreements, the most meaningful handshake generally occurs at the start of the negotiations when the government and contractor teams are introduced to each other. This initial handshake conveys an important first impression to each side even when the participants are not consciously aware of the nonverbal message.

A firm handshake or "executive grip" conveys such positive attributes as power, confidence, and sincerity. In contrast, a loose handshake may send unflattering messages of weakness and insecurity. Some people may even feel slighted when someone uses a casual handshake or just grasps their fingertips. The positive signals conveyed by an appropriate handshake should be accompanied, and thereby reinforced, by other forms of consistent nonverbal messages. For example, handshakers should smile and look the other person straight in the eye to signal honesty and friendliness. Handshakes concluding an agreement could be accomplished by prolonging the shake, by using both hands, or by extending the other hand on the shoulder or upper arm of the other party. Using the other hand in such ways often represents higher degrees of agreement.

Government bargainers can often enhance their images with proper handshakes. Although the nonverbals communicated by the handshake may only represent perceptions to the subconscious mind, the perception of each side is often more important than the actual facts.

7.6 Summary

Summary

Bargainers need an understanding of the different forms of nonverbal communicating to increase the likelihood of successful negotiations. An awareness of nonverbals can be used to obtain important information from the other side. Since nonverbals tend to be more honest than verbal communication, the two types of messages can be compared to detect deception. Negotiators can also use nonverbals to strengthen their bargaining position and avoid unintentional signals that are detrimental to their side. Government bargainers, the people in general, cannot avoid communicating with nonverbals because this form of communication comes naturally. The only question is whether the nonverbal messages sent and received will either help or hinder our ability to negotiate successfully.
